

Russian and Polish Hooligans Clash in Warsaw

June 12, 2012

The  Moscow Times

Russia supporters throwing punches at staff in the Lvov fan zone

WARSAW — Russian football fans clashed with police and Poland supporters in separate incidents in Warsaw on Tuesday, just hours before the two teams were to meet in an emotionally charged European Championship match. Several people were injured.

In what appeared to be the most violent incident, Polish football hooligans were seen attacking Russians, who responded violently. The two sides, made up of dozens of men, kicked and beat each other in the faces, while flares could be seen exploding in their midst.

Associated Press journalists saw several people lying injured and bleeding on the ground, with one of them appearing to be seriously hurt.

Poland and Russia fans were also seen fighting and throwing stones outside the stadium.

There were a number of other incidents as well, which came as Russia fans waving their country's flag marched to the stadium in a show of patriotism seen as provocative to many Poles. It was considered a huge security challenge for police.

In one case, Russia fans clashed with police on a bridge near the National Stadium, and police were later seen making arrests.

In another, a group of clearly drunken Polish men began fighting among themselves, hitting and kicking each other. Two were seen on the ground bleeding, and police intervened, throwing two more to the ground. The men were holding cans of beer and mumbling, and one appeared to be unconscious. An AP reporter witnessed the incident and saw police detain three people.

Poland and Russia share a difficult history, including decades of Moscow's control over Poland during the Cold War. Many Poles felt that the Polish authorities should not have allowed Russians to march as a group in Warsaw, given the historical wounds.

UEFA is to investigate purported racist chanting during Euro 2012 matches between Spain and Italy and Russia and the Czech Republic, the governing body said Tuesday.

Media reports said Italy striker Mario Balotelli was the victim of racist chanting during the Group C match against Spain in Gdansk on Sunday.

Czech Republic defender Theodor Gebre Selassie told reporters he had "noticed" racist chants directed at him in his side's opening Group A game with Russia in Wroclaw.

Some members of the Netherlands squad complained of hearing monkey noises at an open training session at Wisla Krakow's stadium last week when tens of thousands of Poles turned up to watch.

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